

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
5010-104-01

DECLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY DERIVED FROM:
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
AUTOMATIC DECLASSIFICATION GUIDE
DATE 03-02-2012

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC

DATE: 2-7-61

FROM : SA WILLIAM H. LAWRENCE

SUBJECT: ERNEST COLUMBUS WITHERS
PCI

Re Serial 60.

On 2-1-61, JAMES C. MACDONALD, NA, Chief, Memphis Police Department, furnished information from his Department's personnel file regarding ERNEST COLUMBUS WITHERS, a former patrolman. This showed WITHERS to have been born 8-7-22 at Memphis; residence, 225 Reno Avenue, as of 10-11-48; race, Negro; sex, male; wife, [redacted] mother, MINNIE WITHERS; father, ARTHUR EARL WITHERS; former employment, dates not listed, Jarman Shoe Store, Main and Monroe, Memphis; Humko Company, Thomas Avenue, Memphis, U. S. Army and self-employed.

b6 -3
b7C -3

WITHERS was employed as a patrolman on the Police Department from 11-5-48 until 8-25-51. On the latter date WITHERS was caught by [redacted] current Assistant Chief, in the act of dividing money with a male Negro, [redacted] said money being the proceeds from the sale of whiskey by [redacted] which whiskey was provided by WITHERS. WITHERS was summarily fired for conduct unbecoming an officer and is not eligible for rehire.

b6 -5
b7C -5

The file also showed that he was suspended for a day on 8-20-49 for failure to appear in court as a prosecuting witness; that he was suspended for a week on 12-2-48 for fighting with an auto salesman.

MACDONALD pointed out that WITHERS was one of the first Negro officers ever hired by the Memphis PD. He said that while he was intelligent, he had proven himself untrustworthy by illegally engaging in the furnishing of whiskey to another to sell.

MACDONALD added that he personally does not like WITHERS and feels that WITHERS, while no doubt loyal to the

1- [redacted]
1- [redacted]

Memphis Division)

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[REDACTED]

United States, is definitely an opportunist. He pointed out that since leaving the Police Department WITHERS has been self-employed as a free lance news and portrait photographer in the Negro community.

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b7C -5

MACDONALD pointed out that he would not personally trust WITHERS, although he pointed out that WITHERS might be cooperative with any governmental agency if he thought it would be to his advantage to do so. MACDONALD pointed out that on 2-1-61, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] advised that he had a lot of dealings with WITHERS while the latter was on the Police Department. He advised that WITHERS had not been a good officer and required an excessive amount of supervision.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the above, it is not believed that WITHERS can meet the Bureau's reliability requirements as a PCI(RAC) wherein his activities can be directed or controlled. However, because of his many contacts in the racial field, plus his indicated willingness to cooperate with this Bureau, as attested by his recent furnishing of information, it is recommended that WITHERS be considered as a PCI. He will be contacted regarding general criminal matters. If in the course of these contacts he volunteers any information relating to security matters or racial matters, it of course will be accepted. It will be understood, of course, that his activities will not be directed in any manner with regard to racial matters or security matters.

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